

Finding Employment After 50

It's called the "gray ceiling", the challenges people fifty or older face when trying to re-enter the work force. Today, the question of age is becoming less of a factor in longevity with the company, since there are no guarantees that the younger worker will remain with the employer longer than the older worker. In fact, the odds are that the younger worker will move frequently as he or she makes career advances.

Companies seek workers who:

- Can easily adapt to change
- Have current skills
- Are "technology savvy"

The top three mistakes older workers make:

- Using old resumés
- Relying too much on sending resumés response to ads or leads vs. making a contact
- Letting too much time pass before starting the job search

Here are some effective job hunting tips for older workers:

Keep a positive attitude. Never say anything negative about previous bosses or companies you've worked for. Have a "can do" attitude.

Network! Talk to people you know and ask them for leads. They may know of people who are hiring. It's still "who you know" that matters, so make contact with professional colleagues, former bosses and co-workers, anyone who can provide you with information about work in your field of interest. Don't forget your family and friends. Ask them for leads, they may know of people who are hiring.

Keep your skills current. Take courses, seminars or workshops to keep up with the latest developments in your profession. Tell employers that you are willing to learn, use words like "dependable," "flexible," and "adaptable." Learn to use the Internet. Don't be perceived as being out of touch with new technology.

Update your resumé. The traditional chronological resumé, with a long work history, can result in rejection, such as "over-qualified." Use a combination or functional resumé. De-emphasize dates. You will age yourself by listing dates you graduated from high school or college. Emphasize

your last ten years of employment; anything earlier can be summarized. Hiring officials are not interested in what you did twenty years ago; they want to know what you can do today.



Research the company. Find out about the company before you interview. You can use this information to show how your skills, experience, knowledge and abilities can enhance their bottom line.

Prepare for the interview. Be prepared to answer the standard questions about being over-qualified and wanting too much money. Let them know you can do the job. Hiring officials can't or won't come right out and say, "You're too old." Instead they may say something like "You seem over-qualified," etc.

Be prepared for "money" questions. Be flexible but practical. Establish a pay range. The bottom is the least you can accept; the top is what you would like to make. Find out what employers are paying people who work in the occupation at <http://jobs.utah.gov/jsp/wi/utalmis/gotoOccwage.do>

Focus on the assets of older workers. When employers have difficulty finding skilled workers, the older worker takes on a greater value. Older workers can begin to contribute to the company without costly training or disruption to customer service. When selling your job experience, remember other benefits you can bring to the employer or job such as stability, loyalty, knowing the value of the dollar, and a strong work ethic.

